

US Serial No. 10/566643
Page 2 of 16

In the Claims:

1.(currently amended) A method of making tablets of a cleaning composition or of a water-softening composition ~~or tablet precursors therefor~~, comprising the steps of:

forming a premix of cleaning or water-softening composition particulates and a lubricant;

providing the premix into a feed port of an extruder;

providing a binder into the feed port of the extruder or at a point downstream of the feed port, wherein the binder is a solid at room temperature but is mixed in the form of a liquid with the cleaning or water-softening composition particulates or the binder becomes a liquid inside the extruder; and

extruding the resulting mixture,

thereafter cutting the extruded mixture into tablets adapted for use in a ware-washing machine.

~~wherein the extrudate is of one or more strands which are separated into tablets or scored into tablet precursors, shortly after their extrusion, either as extruded or after a further post-extrusion enhancement treatment, wherein a proportion of the cleaning or water softening composition particulates remaining in the solid state during extrusion is greater than 20% w/w and includes a citrate salt having a lower limit particle size of 150 μ m.~~

2.(canceled)

3.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein an extrusion pressure is in the range from 0.3 MPa to 10 MPa.

4.(previously presented) A method according to claim 3 wherein the resulting mixture is extruded at a pressure in excess of 1.2 MPa.

US Serial No. 10/566643
Page 3 of 16

- 5.(previously presented) A method according to claim 4 wherein the resulting mixture is extruded at a pressure in excess of 4 MPa.
- 6.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the extruder is a twin screw extruder with screw overlap, configured predominantly for extrudate advancement and not for mixing or shearing the extrudate.
- 7.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein a strand is subjected to post-extrusion enhancement.
- 8.(previously presented) A method according to claim 7 wherein a strand is subjected to assisted post-extrusion cooling.
- 9.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein a temperature of materials in the extruder is in the range from 40 to 95°C or from 40 to 85°C.
- 10.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the lubricant is a liquid at room temperature.
- 11.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the lubricant comprises a sucrose ester or a sorbitan ester.
- 12.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the lubricant comprises a sucrose oleate.
- 13.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the binder is a material which is solid at room temperature but which is molten under the extrusion conditions.

US Serial No. 10/566643
Page 4 of 16

14.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the binder is polyethylene glycol.

15-25.(canceled)

26.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the post-extrusion enhancement treatment is selected from separating or partially separating a strand into tablets, cutting a strand, cooling a strand, laying a body onto or into a surface of a strand, depositing a pill on a strand, twisting two or more strands around each other and/or pressing two or more strands together.